

Message Text

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FOR CARTER FROM PA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HEREWITH FULL TEXT NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 10 HEADED "THE DIZZY PACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST":

2. IT'S BEEN A MADCAP WEEK FOR MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY.
SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE HAS BEEN DROPPING IN ON ARAB
CAPITALS SEEKING RECRUITS FOR A FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING
IN PLACE OF A GENEVA CONFERENCE MADE UNLIKELY BY ISRAEL'S
UNWILLINGNESS TO DEAL WITH THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGAN-
IZATION. PRESIDENT SADAT OF EGYPT FAVORED SUCH A MEETING--
AT LEAST UNTIL PRESIDENT ASSAD OF SYRIA REJECTED IT.
MEANWHILE PRESIDENT CARTER WEIGHED IN FROM ACROSS THE
SEAS WITH TWO STATEMENTS SUGGESTING THAT THE UNITED
STATES WOULD BEGIN TO DEAL WITH THE P.L.O. IF IT WOULD
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"ESPOUSE" RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 OF THE UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL AND THUS--AT LEAST IMPLICITLY--ACKNOWLEDGE
ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST. MR. VANCE CHIMED IN FROM SAUDI
ARABIA WITH THE NEWS THAT HIS HOSTS THERE EXPECTED SUCH A
SOFTENING OF THE P.L.O.'S POSITION, WHEREUPON PRIME MINISTER
BEGUN OF ISRAEL REPLIED THAT HE WOULD UNDER NO CIRCUM-
STANCES DEAL WITH AN ORGANIZATION OF "GENOCIDISTS ...

PIRATES AND OUTLAWS." FINALLY A P.L.O. SPOKESMAN IN

LEBANON CONTENDED THAT HIS ORGANIZATION HAD ALL ALONG BEEN WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS ON THE BASIS OF THE UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS PROVIDED THEY WERE REVISED TO SPECIFY THAT THE PALESTINIANS ARE NOT SIMPLY "REFUGEES" BUT A NATION IN THEIR OWN RIGHT.

3. NOW A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF IMPRECISION, EVEN DELIBERATE CONFUSION OF LANGUAGE, CAN BE A FORMIDABLE TOOL OF DIPLOMACY. BUT ALL THIS MOTION AND COMMOTION CAN ONLY COMPLICATE THE MOST DIFFICULT ITEMS ON THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATING AGENDA: WHAT FORM, IF ANY, SHALL BE GIVEN TO THE TERRITORIAL EXPRESSION OF PALESTINIAN NATIONALITY? AND WHO SHOULD SPEAK FOR THE PALESTINIANS IN DECIDING THAT QUESTION?

4. IT IS CERTAINLY DESIRABLE FOR THE UNITED STATES TO TRY TO PERSUADE THE P.L.O. TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL AND TO GIVE UP THE DREAM OF RECLAIMING ITS TERRITORY. BUT THAT EFFORT SHOULD NOT LEAD TO THE INADVERTENT DESIGNATION OF THE P.L.O. AS THE ONLY LEGITIMATE VOICE OF PALESTINIAN ASPIRATIONS. OTHER PALESTINIANS MAY WISH TO BE HEARD ON THAT QUESTION. SO MIGHT JORDAN, WHOSE PEOPLE INCLUDE A MAJORITY OF PALESTINIANS. TO DECLARE THE P.L.O. A SEPARATE DELEGATION TO A GENEVA CONFERENCE WOULD VIRTUALLY

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FORECLOSE THE ISSUE.

5. PERHAPS SOMETHING CALLED THE P.L.O. WILL IN TIME INHERIT THE ENTITY TO BE ASSIGNED THE PALESTINIANS. BUT THAT IS A SUBSTANTIAL QUESTION FOR ALL THE PARTIES TO THE NEGOTIATIONS; SO, INDEED, IS THE MEANING OF THE PROMISED "ENTITY." TO DEAL WITH SUCH A QUESTION BY PROCEDURAL DEVICES, AND ON THE RUN, IS TO RISK A DIPLOMATIC DISASTER.

6. IF THERE WAS A LESSON TO BE DRAWN FROM THE ALLEGEDLY HARMONIOUS ENCOUNTER IN WASHINGTON LAST MONTH BETWEEN MR. CARTER AND MR. BEGIN, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN THAT PARTNERS SO UNTRUSTING OF EACH OTHER WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO AVOID SURPRISES. BUT MR. BEGIN CAUGHT THE PRESIDENT UNAWARES WHEN, ONLY A DAY AFTER RETURNING HOME, HE ANNOUNCED THE "LEGALIZATION" OF THREE SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK REGION. AND NOW THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY VANCE HAVE OBVIOUSLY SURPRISED THE ISRAELIS WITH THEIR EXPRESSIONS OF READINESS TO TALK TO THE P.L.O. HAD THEY GIVEN ISRAEL DUE NOTICE, AND SPELLED OUT PRECISELY WHAT THEY EXPECT OF THE P.L.O. TO DEMONSTRATE ITS ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL, MR. BEGIN MIGHT NOT HAVE FELT IT

NECESSARY TO PAINT HIMSELF INTO SUCH A REMOTE CORNER.

7. THESE ARE NOT EASY DAYS IN AMERICAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS
AND THE DAYS AHEAD PROMISE TO BE MORE DIFFICULT STILL.
BUT NEITHER GOVERNMENT WILL GET VERY FAR IF IT LOSES THE
CONFIDENCE OF THE OTHER. IF EVER THERE WAS A TIME FOR
MEASURE, FOR CAREFUL PREPARATION OF EVERY UTTERANCE AND
FOR INTENSE CONSULTATION, IT IS NOW. (END TEXT) CHRISTOPHER

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